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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9868  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1602  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2960  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0623  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3987  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0834  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0389  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 1002  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6832  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8596  
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 1585  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3779

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000460

SIPDIS

STATE FOR IO/MPR/EA

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TAGS: [AORC](#) [APECO](#) [APER](#) [ECON](#) [KUNR](#) [UN](#)  
SUBJECT: COLOMBO PLAN APRIL SESSION READOUT

REF: WITMER/NEVILLE email

¶1. The Colombo Plan Council held a special session on April 2, 2009. Full minutes have been emailed to Colleen Neville and Matthew Goldstein. Representatives from all member countries, with the exception of Sri Lanka, attended. The next Colombo Plan Council Meeting will be held on May 21, 2009.

¶2. Following earlier interview of short-listed candidates, the council agreed to appoint Mr. Nguyen Cuu Duc of Vietnam to the position of Director, Drug Advisory Programme. This two-year appointment will commence on June 1, 2009.

¶3. Addressing fiscal responsibility, the representative from Japan highlighted the need for additional transparency in Colombo Plan financials and the need for the Secretariat to "constantly continue its efforts on cutting expenditure as well as pursuing [other] ways of fund-raising." During the ensuing conversation, representatives of Bangladesh, the Philippines, Pakistan, Japan, Iran and Nepal discussed the current accounting procedures for mandatory and voluntary contributions. The Secretary General outlined the plan's procedures, highlighting in particular the need for the Plan to maintain a working capital account. Following further discussion, the Council adopted "Guidelines on the Utilization of Accumulated Fund" (ref a).

¶4. The President then briefed the Council on the report of the Standing Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters for 2008/2009, specifically the "transfer of funds for programme activities" and the "criterion for exemption of mandatory contribution/arrears by member countries." Specifics of both discussions have been forwarded to Washington.

¶5. Bangladesh reiterated its request to postpone the discussion of an amortization plan for the Government of Bangladesh until a decision is reached on the criterion for exemption of membership fees/arrears. The representative from the Philippines requested that Bangladesh pay its arrears (with no specific timeframe noted) since a waiver of membership fee arrears for Bangladesh will not be approved unanimously. The Secretary General noted that in 2004, the Council rejected the request of Cambodia for a waiver of its membership fee arrears, which led to the withdrawal of Cambodia from the Colombo Plan. In the end, no final decision was made on Bangladesh's request. However, the Council requested that the Secretariat circulate the proposed criterion for exemption of mandatory contribution/arrears by member countries together with the comments and recommendations concerning the Bangladesh request.

¶6. Under "Any Other Business," Japan requested the Secretariat to submit a report about the revision of the accounting/auditing system. The Secretariat was also requested to provide an overall picture of the financial situation of the Secretariat, including measures taken to streamlining expenses and alternative raising initiatives.

BLAKE